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PRESS RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

AU Special Representative says IGAD Council of Ministers Meeting is clear testimony of the political and security progress in Somalia

Mogadishu-January 10th, 2014; The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, Ambassador Maman S. Sidikou has described the holding of the 53rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Mogadishu as a clear testimony of the changing political and security landscape in Somalia.

For the first time in more than two decades, a regional meeting bringing together Ministers of Foreign Affairs of IGAD was successfully held in Mogadishu without any incident.

The AU Special Representative noted that the pivotal role of IGAD in the peace, reconciliation and reconstruction process in Somalia could not be more eloquently demonstrated beyond today's historic meeting of its Council of Ministers in Mogadishu.

He said; "Indeed, while we have had both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council as well as the leadership of both the Commission of the African Union and the Secretariat of the United Nations visit Somalia in recent times, surely the convening of this meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers here in Mogadishu is the icing on the cake."

Ambassador Sidikou further observed that the current political and security gains in Somalia would be more meaningful if there is greater support to the Federal Government of Somalia as well as the regional states and administrations to provide the much needed social services to the populations in those areas recently recovered from Al-Shabaab.

He reiterated the AU's commitment to fulfilling its obligations to Somalia, as one of the founding nations of the Union. Ambassador Sidikou also reaffirmed the AU's appreciation to IGAD for its sustained and unwavering commitment and support to the restoration of Somalia to its rightful place in the comity of nations.

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